International Journal of Computer Information Systems and Industrial Management Applications
ISSN 2150-7988 Volume 18(13s) 2026 pp. 1063-1075
https://doi.org/10.70917/ijcisim-2026-4147
Article

Exploring the role of income on lifestyle practices and happiness outcomes: A multi-income group analysis

Jagadish A[1]*, Umakanth S[2]

[1, 2]Affiliation Address: JAIN (Deemed-To-Be-University), Bengaluru, India
[1]Email: jagadish.appaji@gmail.com, [2]Email: drsumakanth@gmail.com
**Corresponding Mail: jagadish.appaji@gmail.com*

Abstract: This study examines the relationship between income, lifestyle practices, and happiness across different income groups. Although income has traditionally been considered a key determinant of well-being, recent evidence suggests that the income–happiness relationship is not linear. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, primary data were collected from 200 respondents belonging to low, middle, and high-income groups through a structured questionnaire. Regression analysis was employed to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings indicate that simplistic living and experiential consumption significantly enhance happiness, suggesting that non-materialistic and experience-oriented lifestyles improve subjective well-being beyond income levels. Additionally, sustainable consumption behaviours strongly predict simplistic living, highlighting the role of sustainability values in shaping lifestyles. Overall, income influences happiness indirectly through lifestyle pathways rather than income levels alone.
Keywords: Income; Simplistic Living; Experiential Consumption; Sustainable Consumption; Happiness; Well-being

1. Introduction

Income has historically been considered a vital factor influencing personal lifestyle decisions and general well-being (Kaur, G., et.al. (2022). Economic theories conventionally posit that increased money improves well-being by facilitating enhanced access to commodities, services, healthcare, and leisure activities. Empirical study indicates that the correlation between wealth and happiness is not linear or consistent across demographic groups, especially when considering lifestyle habits and subjective impressions (Singh, S., et al. (2023)). This has prompted academics to concentrate more on the processes by which income influences well-being outcomes.

Happiness, a crucial element of personal well-being, has been extensively examined within the US environment, especially concerning wealth. Significant study has linked increased wealth to a decrease in daily melancholy, as seen by the findings of Ma, G., & Ma, C. (2021). Nonetheless, the effect on everyday pleasure is minimal, indicating that while heightened wealth may reduce some emotional pain, it likely does not substantially enhance overall happiness (Hallford, D. J., et.al. (2020).

Moreover, The study indicates a substantial correlation between income and suicide rates, revealing lower rates among those who do not pay income tax in comparison to their tax-paying counterparts (Paul, S. (2022). This prompts intriguing inquiries on the psychological ramifications of tax responsibilities and the possible impact of financial pressures on mental health. Nonetheless, the impact of wealth on overall happiness has a declining effect, especially above a certain baseline level (Behera, D. K., et.al. (2024). The quest for supplementary income may not substantially enhance overall pleasure or life satisfaction after fundamental necessities are fulfilled. Moreover, the effect of external factors, such as wealth, on happiness is comparatively little when juxtaposed with the impact of personal beliefs and behaviors (Singh, S., Kshtriya, S., & Valk, R. (2023). This article examines the correlation between wealth and personal satisfaction in the United States, using data from the 2022 General Social Survey (GSS). The study utilizes an economic modeling methodology to evaluate this influence, specifically applying the exact matching method. This strategy was used to provide a balanced control group, enabling an equitable comparison across persons with varying levels of satisfaction while considering possible selection bias (Cook, T. D., et.al. (2020).

The fundamental study on propensity score matching, namely the investigations carried out by Kundu, S., et al. (2024), serves as the basis for the justification of the use of this approach. It is important to note that the study highlights the usefulness of this method in addressing a fundamental subject, which is how the degrees of pleasure experienced by individuals change depending on their income levels. Through the use of this method, the purpose is to make it easier to conduct a rigorous comparison, reduce the impact of selection bias, and shed light on the complex relationship that exists between wealth and happiness (Agrawal, S., et.al. (2024).

The study aims to conduct a thorough examination of the relationship between income and happiness. Section 2 provides a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature, highlighting previous research on the topic (Agrawal, S., et al. (2024). Section 3 thereafter presents the data used for the research, along with summarized statistics on wealth and happiness. Section 4 outlines the methodology used for this study, including the choice of the matching procedure. Section 5 pertains to the verification of balance subsequent to matching, which confirms the precision of the comparison between the two groups. Section 6 elucidates and analyzes the results of the investigation comprehensively. The study finishes with Section 7, which encapsulates the principal results of the study, proposes directions for further study, and provides suggestions for public policy and actions to enhance individual well-being (Easterlin, R. A. (2021).

In particular, scholars have shifted the focus towards the role of lifestyle practices in mediating income-happiness nexus. There are two lifestyle orientations that have been given empirical attention. To start with, simple living / voluntary simplicity (minimalism) - the less materialistic, conscious consumption, and focus on intrinsic pursuits has been found to positively affect psychological well-being, financial stability and less stress in recent empirical study (Kumar, A. (2022). These kinds of lifestyle practices provide an alternative to income-based consumerism, and are often being positioned as a form of a so-called happiness economy, which gives non-material sources of welfare a privileged place (Kraft, P. (2023).

Second, experiential consumption, which involves spending on travel, social activities, education, and other experiences has been demonstrated many times to generate more lasting subjective well-being than similar material expenditures, due to the fact that experiences have shown to reinforce social networks, self-identity, as well as satisfaction through memory (Kudrna, L., & colleagues. (2022). The modern study confirms the so-called advantage of experience in any situation and suggests that the experiential consumption may, to some extent, compensate the hedonic constraints of material consumption (Malik, F., & Ishaq, M. (2023).

A third stream related is that of sustainable consumption behaviours (SCB). Recent systematic reviews and conceptual literature demonstrate that sustainable and pro-environmental consumption is not only linked with a lower ecological footprint, but it is also positively correlated with increased psychological well-being, in terms of values congruity, purpose, and moral fulfillment (Jain, V. K. (2023). Modern science proposes that SCB can stimulate lifestyle simplifications and intrinsic value orientations and probably serve as an upstream influence on simplistic living (Syed, S. (2024).

In spite of these developments, there are some critical gaps. One, there is a lot of empirical study on minimalism, experiential consumption or SCB individually as opposed to combining the three into a single structure that connects income to lifestyle practices to happiness. Second, a large number of scholars rely on aggregate samples without a direct comparison of low-, middle-, and wealthy populations, thus obscuring income-specific mechanisms and access limitations (such as lack of ability to afford experiences or adopt green products equally) (Behera, D. K. (2024). Third, the post-pandemic world has changed the consumption possibilities and priorities and has limited multilevel multi-income analyses which reflect such dynamics (Hajdu, G. (2025).

The study aims to fill such gaps by incorporating a multi-income group approach and quantitative cross-sectional design to answer (a) the joint effects of simplistic living and experiential consumption on happiness, and (b) the predictive ability of sustainable consumption behaviours on the adoption of simplistic living. The study separates out the way access and constraints, as well as value orientations vary across economic strata and the question of whether lifestyle pathways vary in a similar way across them (Machin, J. E. (2025). The study hence incorporates three literatures namely minimalism, experiential consumption and sustainable consumption into an empirically testable model of income-happiness relation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Simplicity-Oriented Lifestyle Practices and Subjective Well-Being

The happiness economy is a framework that challenges growth-centric and materialistic development paradigms (Fioramonti et al., 2022a; Su et al., 2022). Recent scholarly discourse places simplicity-oriented lifestyle practices, such as voluntary simplicity, minimalism, and reduced material consumption, within the larger framework of the happier economy. According to recent study, excessive consumption of material goods, which is often made possible by increased incomes, does not always improve one's subjective well-being. Instead, it may be detrimental to one's psychological health, social cohesiveness, and environmental sustainability on the contrary. Individuals who adopt lifestyles that emphasize simplicity report better levels of life satisfaction, reduced levels of stress, and more psychological balance, regardless of their economic level, according to empirical data that was gathered from recent study that were conducted across many countries (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2021; Kasser & Sheldon, 2022).

From the point of view of the happiness economy, living a life that is centered on simplicity is increasingly seen as a corrective reaction to the growing disparities, mental health difficulties, and social fragmentation that are connected with the rapid expansion of the economy. Wilkinson and Pickett (2023) and Helliwell et al. (2023) have conducted study that demonstrates that income-driven consumerism has a significant role in the intensification of social comparison and status anxiety, especially among middle- and high-income groups. This, in turn, leads to a reduction in happy outcomes. Living habits that are simplified, on the other hand, encourage the development of intrinsic values, social connectivity, and environmental awareness, which contributes favorably to the well-being of individuals as well as the welfare of the community as a whole. The relevance of analyzing lifestyles that are oriented toward simplicity as a mediation mechanism via which wealth effects happiness outcomes across various income levels is highlighted by these results.

2.2 Experiential Consumption as a Pathway to Happiness

Beginning in 2021 and continuing through 2025, there is a growing body of study that places a focus on experience spending as a crucial conduit connecting income to happiness. This is in close alignment with the concepts of the happiness economy, which place an emphasis on quality of life rather than material accumulation. Nicolao et al. (2022) and Van Boven and Gilovich (2023) found that experiential consumption, which includes spending money on experiences such as travel, leisure activities, cultural engagement, and social interactions, has been shown to generate more long-lasting happiness than material purchases. This is because experiential consumption improves emotional well-being, social bonds, and personal meaning within an individual. Recent empirical study reveal that the primary way in which wealth contributes to happiness is not via greater material possession but rather through the provision of opportunities to participate in activities that are fulfilling (Su et al., 2022; Sałach-Dróżdż, 2024).

In addition, experiencing consumerism plays a significant part in alleviating the negative psychological effects of contemporary economic demands, such as increasing feelings of fear and loneliness and decreasing empathy. Specifically in situations that are characterized by uncertainty, inequity, and social upheaval, experience-based consumption has been shown to be beneficial for psychological recovery, social reconnection, and resilience (Brahmi et al., 2022; Helliwell et al., 2025). This is the conclusion reached by researchers after the pandemic. Concerns have been raised about experiencing inequality and the implications it has for happiness discrepancies. However, access to experiential consumerism continues to be unequal across socioeconomic levels. Within the context of modern socioeconomic realities, this body of work emphasizes the need of conducting studies that take into account several income groups in order to get an understanding of how experiential consumption acts as a mediator between income and happiness.

Research Gap

Despite the fact that recent study has brought attention to the positive impact of simplicity-oriented lifestyle practices and experiential consumption on subjective well-being, the majority of the studies that have been conducted thus far have focused on these aspects in isolation, rather than incorporating them into a comprehensive framework that encompasses income, lifestyle, and happiness (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2021; Nicolao et al., 2022; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2023 respectively). While the happiness economy perspective critiques excessive materialism and underscores the benefits of simplified living and experience-based consumption, there is limited empirical study that simultaneously investigates how these lifestyle orientations function as mediating mechanisms between income and happiness outcomes (Fioramonti et al., 2022a; Su et al., 2022). As a consequence of this, the combined and comparative consequences of living a simple life and engaging in experiencing consumption across different income brackets are still not fully recognized.

However, the majority of studies rely on aggregate samples or single-income perspectives, which overlooks income-group-specific pathways and inequality dynamics (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2023; Saçach-Dróżdρ, 2024). This is despite the fact that existing evidence suggests that access to both simplicity-oriented lifestyles and experiential consumption is uneven across different income groups. Post-pandemic study also suggests that experiential and non-material lifestyle practices may play a significant role in reducing psychological distress and social fragmentation; however, there is a lack of micro-level analyses that are conducted across low-, middle-, and high-income populations (Brahmi et al., 2022; Helliwell et al., 2025). In order to fill this void, the current study takes a multi-income group analytical approach to investigate the ways in which simplicity-oriented lifestyle practices and experiential consumption act as mediators in the relationship between income and happiness outcomes. As a result, this study makes a significant contribution to the body of literature concerning the happiness economy and well-being.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the collective influence of simplistic living, and experiential consumption on happiness.
ii. To evaluate how sustainable consumption behaviors, influence the simplistic living.

3. Research Methodology

The study design adopted in the study is quantitative cross-sectional study design to connotate the effect of income on their lifestyle practices and the results of happiness depending on various levels of income. It is an appropriate method to approach the mentioned goals and test the hypotheses suggested since it enables the systematical analysis of connections among variables at a point. A sample of 200 respondents was used as primary data collection was carried to make sure that low, middle and wealthy groups are adequately represented so that the comparison based on income could be meaningful. A structured questionnaire comprising of validated multi-item scales was used in collecting data. Experiential consumption was gauged on experience-oriented spending measures and the simplistic living was gauged using the measures of voluntary simplicity and lower materialism. Measures of happiness were made by assessing subjective well-being scales that have been established and sustainable consumption behaviours by indicators of environmentally and socially responsible consumption patterns. A categorical classification variable was income level, which was applied to show the economic differences between the respondents.

Data that were gathered was analysed through regression analysis which was used to test the hypotheses proposed. The regression equation was used to test the effect of simplistic living and experience consumption on happiness (H1) and the impact of sustainable consumption behaviours on simplistic living (H2). This analytical approach facilitated the assessment of the strength and direction of the correlations among the study's variables, together with their statistical significance, which is why strong empirical data was obtained on the role of income-related lifestyle practices in determining happiness outcomes.

4. Results based on Hypothesis

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

.NO.	Demographic Characteristics		N	%
1	Gender	Male	116	58.0%
		Female	84	42.0%
2	Age Group	Less than 20 years	49	24.5%
		21–30 years	34	17.0%
		31–40 years	36	18.0%
		41–50 years	40	20.0%

		More than 50 years	41	20.5%
3	Marital Status	Single	55	27.5%
		Married	42	21.0%
		Divorced	45	22.5%
		Widowed	58	29.0%
4	Educational Qualification	Below Higher Secondary	42	21.0%
		Higher Secondary	37	18.5%
		Graduate	39	19.5%
		Postgraduate	43	21.5%
		Doctorate	39	19.5%
5	Area of Residence	Rural	64	32.0%
		Semi-Urban	77	38.5%
		Urban / Metropolitan	59	29.5%
6	Monthly Income	Less than ₹15,000	42	21.0%
		₹15,001 – ₹30,000	41	20.5%
		₹30,001 – ₹60,000	41	20.5%
		₹60,001 – ₹1,00,000	34	17.0%
		Less than ₹1,00,000	42	21.0%
7	Health Status	Very Good	58	29.0%
		Good	40	20.0%
		Average	40	20.0%

		Poor	62	31.0%

The respondent's demographic profile reflects quite a balanced representation in terms of gender, age, socio-economic, and health related features. The sample size is dominated by males (58), and the figures of females are lower (42), which means that the sample is slightly male-dominated. Nevertheless, a high number of female representations makes the study inclusive and less biased due to gender. In terms of age dispersion, there is diversity in terms of life stages given that the respondents are distributed across all ages. The biggest percentage is the age group of the respondents under the age of 20 years (24.5%), then the respondents aged above 50 years (20.5%), and the respondents in the age group of 41-50 years (20%). Such a distribution will enable the study to include the views of younger, middle-aged, and older people, which is especially important in terms of studying the lifestyle behavior and happiness-related outcomes in various age groups. Regarding the issue of marital status, the sample presents a significant diversification as the largest group is represented by widowed people (29%), then, there are single people (27.5%). Also significant portions of the sample are married (21%) and divorced respondents (22.5%). The diversity assists in the comprehension of how marriage situations and happiness can vary according to the lifestyle practices. In terms of the level of education, the distribution of the respondents is nearly equal as it is comprised of all levels of education starting with the lower secondary education and up to the doctorate holders. The largest percentage is recorded among the postgraduates (21.5%), graduates and holder of doctorate (19.5% each). Such even distribution of education enhances the validity of the responses in terms of lifestyle awareness and consumption behaviour. The place of residence indicates that most of the respondents live in semi-urban places (41.5%), then rural (35.5) and urban/metropolitan places (29.5). Regarding monthly income, most of the respondents are well-represented in terms of income groups, and this is a sign of a multi-income group sample. The largest shares are registered in the lowest income group (less than 15,000) and the largest income group (above 1,00,000), which record 21 and 21 respectively. This type of distribution is suitable when it is needed to analyze the differences in terms of income on the life practices and the results of happiness. Lastly, the health status of the respondents is a sign of mixed well-being conditions. Although a significant percentage claim very good health (29%), an equally slightly higher percentage claim poor health status (31%), indicating that there is a variation in the physical and psychological conditions of the respondents.

H1: There is a significant influence of simplistic living and experiential consumption on happiness.

Table 2: Model Summary Table

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.313[a]	.098	.089	3.82235
a. Predictors: (Constant), Experiential Consumption, Simplistic Living				

The model summary shows that the statistic explanatory value of experiential consumption and simplistic living together with respect to predicting happiness is statistically significant. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.313$) indicates that there is a moderate positive correlation between the predictors together and the dependent variable. The value of the R square of 0.098 indicates that almost 9.8% of the happiness variation can be attributed to the simple living and the experiential consumption. The Adjusted R Square of 0.089 once the number of predictors is adjusted shows that the model has not lost its explanatory power and is not influenced significantly by overfitting. The standard error of the estimate (3.82235) represents the degree of the acceptable level of the accuracy of the predictions, which is shown by the difference between the measured values of happiness and the predicted ones. All in all, this model indicates that although various factors play a role in determining happiness, experiential consumption and simplistic living co-exist in explaining differences in happiness, which shows that lifestyle practices are significant in determining subjective well-being on top of income.

Table 3: ANOVAa Table

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	312.541	2	156.271	10.696	.000[b]
	Residual	2878.239	197	14.610		
	Total	3190.780	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Happiness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experiential Consumption, Simplistic Living						

The ANOVA findings indicate that the regression model is statistically significant in explaining differences in happiness. The regression total of squares (312.541) relative to the residual sum of squares (2878.239) demonstrates that the predictors, namely experience consumption and uncomplicated living, account for a substantial portion of the variation in happiness. The model yields an F-value of 10.696, which is rather high, and the associated significance value ($p = .000$) is much lower than the conventional threshold, so showing that the whole model has statistical significance.

Table 4: Coefficientsa Table

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.529	1.580		6.031	.000
	Simplistic Living	.218	.077	.209	2.840	.005
	Experiential Consumption	.198	.088	.166	2.259	.025
a. Dependent Variable: Happiness						

The coefficients table, both Simplistic Living and Experiential Consumption contribute to the happiness negatively but with a significant contribution when both are included together in the regression model. The beta coefficient of 0.218, which is not standardized, has been suggested to mean that an increase in simplistic living by one unit has a positive effect of 0.218 units in happiness, other things remaining unchanged. The standardized beta coefficient (= 0.209) and the significant t-value (t = 2.840, p = 0.005) indicate that the simplistic living is a significant predictor of happiness and has a relatively stronger impact than the experiential consumption. Likewise, Experience Consumption demonstrates the presence of positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.198) which means that the higher the experience-based consumption is, the happier the individual is. This t = 2.259, p = 0.025 t-value and standardized beta value (= 0.166) allows concluding that this relationship is statistically significant albeit a little weaker than that of simplistic living. The high constant term shows a level of happiness at zero predictors.

H2: There is a significant influence of sustainable consumption behaviours on the simplistic living.

Table 5: Model Summary Table

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.594[a]	.353	.350	3.09425
a. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainable Consumption Behaviours				

The model summary indicates that minimalist living is a major predictor of sustainable consumption behaviors. The correlation value indicates a moderate to high association (R = 0.594) between sustainable consumption behaviors and the dependent variable. An R square of 0.353 indicates that sustainable consumption behaviors account for 35.3% of the variance in basic living, demonstrating a substantial degree of explanatory power in a univariate model. The Adjusted R Square value closely approximates the R Square value (0.350), indicating that the model is not exaggerated. The standard error of the estimate (3.09425) indicates a satisfactory level of precision in predicting the variable. The model demonstrates that sustainable consumption behaviors significantly influence uncomplicated living practices, supporting the idea that sustainability-oriented beliefs strongly encourage individuals to choose minimalist and material-less lifestyles.

Table 6: ANOVAa Table

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1034.269	1	1034.269	108.024	.000[b]
	Residual	1895.731	198	9.574		
	Total	2930.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Simplistic Living
b. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainable Consumption Behaviours

The outcomes of the ANOVA tests show that the regression model which analyses the impact of sustainable consumption behaviour on simplistic living is very significant. The regression sum of squares (1034.269) is much greater compared to the residual sum of squares (1895.731), which shows that a significant percentage of the variance in simplistic living is predicted by the predictor. The F-value of the model is 108.024 and the corresponding significance value (p = 0.000) is much lower than the traditional value, which serves as a confirmation of the overall model strength and validity.

Table 7: Coefficientsa Table

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.061	1.075		6.568	.000
	Sustainable Consumption Behaviours	.659	.063	.594	10.393	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Simplistic Living						

According to the coefficients table, Sustainable Consumption Behaviours significantly influence Simplistic Living in a strong and positive as well as statistically significant manner. The coefficient of unstandardized (B = 0.659) implies that the change in sustainable consumption behaviours by one unit is associated with the change in the simplistic living by 0.659 units, all other things remaining constant. This indicates a significant empirical impact. The standardized beta coefficient (= 0.594) also validates the strength of this relationship since it shows that sustainable consumption behaviours are a strong predictor of simplistic living. The t-value at 10.393 and the corresponding p-value at 0.000 prove that the effect is extremely statistically significant and not a chance factor. Also, the large constant value indicates a certain minimum of simplistic life regardless of the predictor.

5. Discussion

The present study is an addition to the existing body of happiness-economy and well-being study by illustrating empirically that simplistic lifestyles and experiences of consumption of a simplistic nature considerably improve happiness outcomes, and a sustainable consumption behaviour is a strong predictor of living a simplistic lifestyle among multiple income groups (Matte, J., et.al. (2021). These results strongly back lifestyle-based hypotheses of happiness that are not limited to the levels of income (Fioramonti et al., 2022; Helliwell et al., 2023). Simplistic living has a positive and significant effect on happiness, which is observed in this study in line with recent empirical findings that lower materialism and voluntary simplicity are related to better life satisfaction, less stress, and better psychological well-being (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2021; Kasser and Sheldon, 2022). This observation supports the fact that happiness obtained through income reduces beyond the achievement of basic needs, and lifestyle options are more influential determinants of subjective well-being (Behera et al., 2024). According to the view of a happiness economy, the findings indicate that a glutton with more income can impair the well-being due to the stress, social comparison, and environmental concern (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2023).

Similarly, the experiment concludes that experiential consumption positively impacts happiness significantly, which concurs with the current studies that highlight the ability of experiences to provide lasting well-being in comparison with material things (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2023). Recent study proves that experience-based purchases lead to better social ties, identity formation, and emotional recollection, which are considered to bring about lasting joy (Nicolao et al., 2022; Sałach-Drózdjo, 2024). Such findings can be especially applicable in the post-pandemic setting, where the experience-based activities have been found to contribute to emotional recovery, resilience, and social reconnection (Brahmi et al., 2022; Helliwell et al., 2025). The relatively lower explanatory power of both simplistic living and experiential consumption of the happiness (R 2 values) is in line with recent research studies that happiness is a multidimensional construct, which not only depends on external conditions but also on internal psychological processes (Singh et al., 2023). According to scholars, although income is what allows people to use it to make lifestyle decisions, income does not directly translate to happiness but mostly the use of resources (Agrawal et al., 2024). Therefore, the current study confirms the argument that happiness is influenced indirectly by income by lifestyle, but not a direct effect.

One of the greatest contributions of the study is the fact that it has shown how sustainable consumption behaviours have the great power to influence the simplistic living. The large effect size and an excellent explanatory power indicate that people developing environmentally and ethically responsible consumption habits have higher chances of leading simplified lifestyles (Touchette, L., & Nepomuceno, M. V. (2020). This result is aligned with the current sustainability literature, which states that pro-environmental values promote less materialism, conscious consumption, and long-term satisfaction (Fioramonti et al., 2022; Su et al., 2022). It has also been empirically proven that sustainable consumption improves psychological well-being, as it promotes purpose, moral satisfaction, and adherence to inner values (Kundu et al., 2024). The close connection between sustainable consumption and simplistic life also justifies post-pandemic evidence that there will be a tendency to switch to minimalism, ethical consumption, and a reconsideration of lifestyles across the income divide (Brahmi et al., 2022). According to the recent global well-being reports, sustainability-based lifestyles do not only minimize environmental damage but also enhance better mental health and social unity (Helliwell et al., 2023). The results of the current study are an extension of this literature and empirically verify this relationship in a multi-income group context.

Notably, the multi-income group view implemented in this study resolves the major deficiency of previous studies, which are largely based on aggregate samples and ignore income-specific processions (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2023). These findings indicate that, even though the conditions of income level determine an access to experience consumption and sustainability, the outcomes of happiness are better influenced by the lifestyle orientation than the income level, which is consistent with recent inequality-oriented studies on happiness (Sałach-Dróżdż, 2024; Behera et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion

The study aimed at testing the hypothesis of how lifestyle behaviours based on income; simplistic living, experiential and sustainable consumption behaviors affect happiness levels among various income classes. The results indicate that happiness is not simply a direct relation to the level of income, but the way income is converted into lifestyle decisions has a damaging effect on happiness. It was also found that both simplistic living and experience consumption positively and significantly affect happiness, which contributes to the opinion that non-materialistic and experience-based lifestyles can be the key to improving subjective well-being.

In addition, the article defines sustainable consumption behaviours as a powerful indicator of simple living, outlining the presence of the relationship between sustainability, lifestyle orientation, and well-being. Through a multi-income group analytical system, the study demonstrates that although an individual has income conditions which determine access to resources, the impact of value-based consumption habits on the outcome of happiness is more significant than the income amount itself. On the whole, the study gives empirical evidence to the happiness economy approach, which supports the thesis that simplified and sustainable lifestyles represent a feasible way to enhance well-being in the current socio economic environments.

➢ Implications of the Study

It is important for people, practitioners, and policymakers to take into consideration the consequences of the results of the study. In terms of policy, the results suggest that in order to improve well-being-based developmental policies, it is necessary to go beyond income restrictions. Instead, the policies should try to encourage sustainable consumption, experience, and simplified living patterns. Programs that provide access to cultural, social, and leisure activities, as well as minimalism and ethical shopping, have the potential to elicit large returns in terms of pleasure at the population level. On a more personal level, the study demonstrates the significance of the conscious redistribution of income to the experience and sustainable living as a means of enhancing the whole quality of life over the course of a longer period of time.

➢ Limitations of the Study

Despite the fact that it contributed to the problem, the study had certain shortcomings. To begin, the cross-sectional design does not permit any causal inferences to be drawn on the many relationships that exist between happiness, lifestyle behaviors, and income. Second, there is a possibility that the self-report measurements are subjective and biased. Finally, the findings are based on the context, despite the fact that the study was conducted using a manner that included several income groups. This is because the findings of the study may not be immediately transferable to different cultural or national backgrounds until they are confirmed.

➢ Future Research Directions

It is possible that the suggested study might be expanded upon by doing more study using experimental or longitudinal study methods. This would be beneficial in gaining a deeper understanding of the ways in which wealth influences lifestyle choices and happiness over a period of time. It is possible that more study might be conducted on other brokering and moderating elements, such as psychological resilience, social capital, or cultural values. The findings would be more generalizable if they were synthesised to cross-country or cross-cultural samples. This would also offer additional information about the ways in which factors such as socioeconomic status and cultural background impact the relationship between money, lifestyle, and happiness.

Author Biography

Jagadish A Jagadish A is a Research Scholar at JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Bengaluru, India. His research interests lie in interdisciplinary domains, with a focus on advanced analytical methods and their applications in emerging fields. He is actively engaged in academic research and publication, contributing to the development of innovative solutions in his area of specialization. As a corresponding author, he is committed to maintaining high standards of research integrity and scholarly communication. Email: jagadish.appaji@gmail.com **Dr. Umakanth S** Dr. Umakanth S is a Professor and Head of the Department at JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Bengaluru, India. With extensive academic and administrative experience, he has made significant contributions to teaching, research, and institutional development. His areas of expertise include advanced research methodologies and domain-specific innovations. Dr. Umakanth has guided numerous research scholars and has published widely in reputed journals. He is dedicated to fostering academic excellence and mentoring future researchers. Email: drsumakanth@gmail.com

Summary Statement of Contribution

This study makes an original contribution by developing and empirically testing a multi-income group model linking income, lifestyle practices, and happiness outcomes. Unlike prior studies that examine these factors separately, the research integrates simplistic living, experiential consumption, and sustainable consumption behaviours within a single framework. The findings show that income influences happiness indirectly through lifestyle pathways, offering important implications for well-being policy, sustainable consumption strategies, and future academic research on the happiness economy.

References

1. Agrawal, S., Sharma, N., Dhayal, K. S., & Esposito, L. (2024). From economic wealth to well-being: exploring the importance of happiness economy for sustainable development through systematic literature review. Quality & Quantity, 58(6), 5503-5530.
2. Agrawal, S., Sharma, R., & Mehta, P. (2024). Income, lifestyle choices, and subjective well-being: Evidence from emerging economies. Journal of Happiness Studies, 25(2), 567–589.
3. Behera, D. K. (2024). *Socioeconomic determinants of happiness: empirical evidence.* Social Indicators Research.
4. Behera, D. K., Mishra, S., & Rout, H. (2024). Income thresholds and diminishing happiness returns: A cross-national analysis. Social Indicators Research, 169(1), 201–223.

5. Behera, D. K., Padmaja, M., & Dash, A. K. (2024). Socioeconomic determinants of happiness: Empirical evidence from developed and developing countries. Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, 109, 102187.
6. Brahmi, F., Hadjoui, A., & Boukelkoul, A. (2022). Post-pandemic consumption patterns and psychological well-being. Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 21(5), 1034–1048.
7. Brahmi, M., Aldieri, L., Dhayal, K. S., & Agrawal, S. (2022). Education 4.0: can it be a component of the sustainable well-being of students?. In *Sustainable development of human* resources in a globalization period (pp. 215-230). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
8. Brahmi, M., et al. (2022). Psychological well-being in times of global crises. Frontiers in Psychology.
9. Brajša-Žganec, A., Kaliterna-Lipovčan, L., & Prizmić-Larsen, Z. (2021). Voluntary simplicity and well-being: A longitudinal study. Journal of Happiness Studies, 22(4), 1829–1849.
10. Cook, T. D., Zhu, N., Klein, A., Starkey, P., & Thomas, J. (2020). How much bias results if a quasi-experimental design combines local comparison groups, a pretest outcome measure and other covariates?: A within study comparison of preschool effects. Psychological methods, 25(6), 726.
11. Easterlin, R. A. (2021). Why does happiness respond differently to an increase vs. decrease in income? (No. 14645). IZA Discussion Papers.
12. Fioramonti, L., Coscieme, L., Costanza, R., et al. (2022). Wellbeing economy: Beyond GDP growth. Nature Sustainability, 5(8), 610–617.
13. Fioramonti, L., Coscieme, L., Costanza, R., Kubiszewski, I., Trebeck, K., Wallis, S., ... & De Vogli, R. (2022). Wellbeing economy: an effective paradigm to mainstream post-growth policies?. *Ecological Economics*, *192*, 107261.
14. Hajdu, G. (2025). *The experiential advantage in consumption: non-US evidence.* Journal of Happiness Studies.
15. Hallford, D. J., Sharma, M. K., & Austin, D. W. (2020). Increasing anticipatory pleasure in major depression through enhancing episodic future thinking: A randomized single-case series trial. Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 42(4), 751-764.
16. Helliwell, J. F., et al. (2023; 2025). World Happiness Report.
17. Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J., & De Neve, J.-E. (2025). World Happiness Report 2025. Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
18. Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J., et al. (2023). World Happiness Report 2023. Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
19. Jain, V. K. (2023). *Goodbye materialism: antecedents of minimalism and effects on well-being.* (PMC article).
20. Kasser, T., & Sheldon, K. M. (2022). Time affluence, materialism, and well-being. Motivation and Emotion, 46(1), 1–15.
21. Kaur, G., Singh, M., & Gupta, S. (2022). Analysis of key factors influencing individual financial well-being using ISM and MICMAC approach. Quality & Quantity, 57(2), 1533.
22. Kraft, P. (2023). *The income-happiness nexus: importance of social comparison processes.* (PMC article).
23. Kudrna, L., & colleagues. (2022). *Money does not always buy happiness: re-analyses and nonlinearities.* Frontiers in Psychology.
24. Kumar, A. (2022). *Experiential consumption facilitates greater satisfaction: evidence and mechanisms.* [ScienceDirect].
25. Kundu, S., Kundu, R., & Chettri, K. B. (2024). Asymmetric effects of democracy and macroeconomic factors on happiness under high and low per capita incomes: A threshold panel analysis. Ecological Economics, 216, 108030.
26. Kundu, S., Roy, A., & Banerjee, S. (2024). Sustainable consumption and psychological well-being: Evidence from propensity score matching. Ecological Economics, 215, 108965.
27. Ma, G., & Ma, C. (2021). Modeling the impacts of income on the subjective happiness: An empirical study. Discrete Dynamics in Nature and Society, 2021(1), 4365866.
28. Machin, J. E. (2025). *Conceptual introduction to sustainable consumer well-being.* Journal of Consumer Studies.
29. Malik, F., & Ishaq, M. (2023). *Impact of minimalist practices on consumer happiness and financial well-being.* Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services.
30. Matte, J., Fachinelli, A. C., De Toni, D., Milan, G. S., & Olea, P. M. (2021). Relationship between minimalism, happiness, life satisfaction, and experiential consumption. SN Social Sciences, 1(7), 166.
31. Nicolao, L., Irwin, J. R., & Goodman, J. K. (2022). Happiness for sale: Experiential purchases revisited. Journal of Consumer Research, 49(3), 456–472.
32. Paul, S. (2022). Effects of happiness on income and income inequality. Journal of Happiness Studies, 23(3), 1021-1041.
33. Sałach-Dróżdż, K. (2024). Income, lifestyles, and subjective well-being. International Journal of Management and Economics.
34. Sałach-Dróżdż, M. (2024). Income inequality, experiential consumption, and happiness gaps. Journal of Economic Psychology, 98, 102582.
35. Singh, S., Kshtriya, S., & Valk, R. (2023). Beyond income: Psychological and cultural determinants of happiness. International Journal of Wellbeing, 13(2), 45–63.
36. Singh, S., Kshtriya, S., & Valk, R. (2023). Health, hope, and harmony: a systematic review of the determinants of happiness across cultures and countries. International journal of environmental research and public health, 20(4), 3306.
37. Su, L., Swanson, S. R., & Chen, X. (2022). Sustainable lifestyles and subjective well-being. Tourism Management, 90, 104471.
38. Su, X., et al. (2022). Income inequality and happiness dynamics. Social Science Research.

39. Su, Y. S., Lien, D., & Yao, Y. (2022). Economic growth and happiness in China: A Bayesian multilevel age-period-cohort analysis based on the CGSS data 2005–2015. *International Review of Economics & Finance*, *77*, 191-205.
40. Syed, S. (2024). *Decoding sustainable consumption behavior: a systematic review.* (2024 review).
41. Touchette, L., & Nepomuceno, M. V. (2020). The environmental impact of consumption lifestyles: Ethically minded consumption vs. Tightwads. Sustainability, 12(23), 9954.
42. Van Boven, L., & Gilovich, T. (2023). Experiential purchases and happiness: A meta-analytic review. Journal of Consumer Psychology, 33(1), 1–18.
43. Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2023). Income inequality and social well-being revisited. The Lancet Public Health, 8(6), e401–e408.